

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
WMU ESSENTIAL STUDIES EXECUTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of 12 November 2019**

Members Present: Yvonne Ford, Decker Hains, Kevin Knutson, Diane Riggs, Brian Tripp, Andre Venter, Delores Walcott

Member Absent: Suzan Ayers, Jonathan Bush, Jessica Parker

Ex Officio Member Present: Sarah Summy

Advisory Members Present: Carrie Cumming, Marilyn Duke, Mervyn Elliott, Cynthia Klekar-Cunningham, Matt Provenzale, Dave Reinhold

Committee Chair pro tem Sarah Summy called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Acceptance of the Agenda

A motion was made by Hains, seconded by Knutson, to accept the agenda as provided. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes – 29 October 2019

A motion was made by Trip, seconded by Riggs, to approve the 29 October 2019 minutes as provided. Motion carried.

Chair ProTem's Remarks – Summy

Summy's remarks included:

- There were meetings with departments whose courses were denied. It was explained that the submitters needed to follow the recommendations of the review committee. It was observed that very few seem to be upset or have concerns with the current program standing.
- A follow-up was offered to the discussion from the last meeting regarding equivalent computer courses. When students take these courses (e.g. FCS 2050 and CIS 1020), WMU Essential Studies credit may not be earned for taking both courses. These two particular courses are in two different WMU Essential Studies categories, so a student could think that they have met the WMU Essential Studies requirements, but then can't get credit for the second course. Cumming noted that the departments must have made a determination that they are the same course, and set them up as equivalent courses. Knutson speculated that each of these courses has likely evolved over time; it might be worth looking at whether the courses are still equivalent. Reinhold will contact the department chairs to open the discussion regarding equivalency.
- Parker audited the current WMU Essential Studies curriculum, as distributed at the 29 October meeting, for online courses and identified no gaps.

WMU Essential Studies Director's Remarks – Elliott

Elliott's remarks included:

- He met with Lee Honors College, which has pending classes.
- He and Reinhold will be visiting Kalamazoo Valley Community College to review the program.

Course Review and Approval Committee - Hains

Hains' remarks included:

- The WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee has held two regularly scheduled meetings plus two additional Friday retreats to close out submissions for 2020.
- Planning for fall 2021 course reviews will begin next.
- It was asked if a department wants to change an assessment plan, would it be required to go through the course approval process. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee agreed that the purpose of initial submission of assessment plans was to verify that there plans existed for assessing learning outcomes. Reinhold and Cumming advised that changing course categories, descriptions, or Student Learning Outcomes are course changes that must follow the curriculum change process. Assessments are assignments, and the question is whether a change in an assignment or assessment requires re-evaluation. Reinhold suggested for regular review of WMU Essential Studies courses, faculty be asked if the assessment plan has been modified since its initial approval. The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee agreed that faculty are being asked to do things that they haven't done in the past, and they should be encouraged to try something new and change it if it doesn't work out. Creating complicated processes to make changes might discourage improvement and/or innovation.
- Hains noted that the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee will consider publishing windows of time during which changes to WMU Essential Studies courses may be made, similar to open enrollment for benefits. He anticipates that this will allow for better management of resources needed to evaluate changes.

ACTION ITEM

WMU Essential Studies 2020 Curriculum

Elliott distributed three documents: one with all fully approved courses; second with courses that are still pending and will be voted on at the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee 18 November meeting; third with the courses in Diversity/Inclusion and Sustainability. He noted that there are still outstanding issues:

- Some returns from originators are still outstanding and those courses could potentially be denied
- PHIL-3200 is a 3000 level course in a foundational level category
- In some departments, science with a lab are two separate courses. Reinhold suggested treating them as one course. Summy noted that it is not always clear if the assessment will occur in the lab or the lecture. This is a historical problem. Discussion was held.

Motion was made by Knutson, seconded by Walcott, to accept the proposed fall 2020 fully approved courses as well as the pending courses that can be resolved and voted on by the WMU Essential Studies Course Review and Approval Committee by 18 November. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION / INFORMATION ITEMS

Resubmission Process

This topic was postponed.

Student Webpage

Summy reported that the Western Student Association will review the webpage once the final fall 2020 curriculum is ready. Duke suggested that First-Year experience students might also be good reviewers.

OTHER

Discussion was held regarding what needs to be done now that the curriculum has been approved. Knutson suggested the need for a thorough communication plan. Reinhold and Elliot will be meeting with the Provost and will ask for input. Summy and Hains will seek input from the Faculty Senate Executive Board. Hains suggested a celebratory launch and Summy suggested a thank you event for everyone who has served on the many committees. Discussion will continue at the next meeting since many stakeholders will need to be involved.

Elliott and Summy reported the following:

- They met with faculty who are piloting the Student Learning Outcome assessment in Elearning and the instructional designers. They reviewed the process for submitting assessments, and discussed ways to make large class assessments easier. Several potential solutions were explored
- Faculty are needed to pilot some large classes for next semester; committee members were asked to send recommendations to Elliott or Summy. Hains suggested that each college be represented, ideally each department.
- Elliott shared that ways to evaluate large classes easily needs to be identified.
- There are concerns about the amount of time needed to enter evaluations.
- Classes using iClicker or Scantron may have data already that might be able to be imported into the grade book. Davidson is working on this issue.
- Faculty education sessions in spring 2020 will be designed for two groups: those with large classes; and those with smaller classes.
- Elliott shared that a new staff member from Online Education was present at the meeting. She will be taking over Julie Scott's former role. She has already begun entering the rubrics for WMU Essential Studies courses.

ADJOURNMENT

The WMU Essential Studies Executive Advisory Committee will meet next on 26 November 2019 from 1 to 2:30 p.m., in room 205 of the Bernhard Center. Chair pro tem Sarah Summy adjourned the meeting at 2:17 p.m.

Submitted by: Yvonne Ford, Secretary